

KERALA

PAST AND PRESENT

VOLUME I

PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY



L. A. KRISHNA IYER

It is at long independs that are authoritative and thought-proving glook on ethnology or no out in our land where study and research in this large of man is jet in a trul way. This back on the Probletonic Archaeology of Korala weitten by one who has made a contribution to the growth of authorpological study in I dia will be unleaded by scholars and sendents of the autiquit or the world over.

No part of India is more rich or interestly for the study of social institutions than there is need to greephical position renders it specially unportant for the archaeologist and annalist.

In the present volume, the first of a sures in her the general caption Kerelas-Past & Present, Mr. L. A. Krishna Lyar of the Colvestly of Madras has and several the safe from the scraphene of reformation about the prehistoric antiquities of Kerela and arrange them in their proper perspective wills the aid of otherslay on the last of European methods"—in alrest, "to retail the history of human progress of the carriest man" in the light of modern developments.

THE PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY OF KERALA

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TO MY WIFE



FOREWORD

THE geographical position of Kerala renders it specially important for the historian and archaeologist. Cut off as it is from the main peninsular India by the Western Ghats its land communications have always been difficult and streams of migration have tended to pass it by, as the predominance of ancient physical types on the Malabar Coast shows. The Rigvedic immigrants, though they knew of Kerala. do not appear to have reached it in any numbers and, as ancient traditions claim, it is the land of Shiva, whose image has been found at Mohenjo-Daro and who, it is now generally agreed, is a pre-Riguedic deity. The physical types of Kerala, the Dravidian speech and, not the least, the megalithic monuments which Mr. Krishna Iver so fully describes, all point to a link with the Mediterranean by way of Asia Minor, just as does the culture of Mohenjo-Daro, and this link extends to the far Western Isles of Europe in one direction

and to Indonesia in the other. The author, therefore, when writing of the prehistoric archaeology of Kerala is not dealing with something of merely local interest but with relics, fortunately preserved by partial isolation, of what, to the best of our knowledge, has been the dominant culture of the temperate and subtropical zone of Europe and Asia in the third millenium B. C.

There is every reason to hope that in secluded Kerala there have survived not only material remains of the remote past, but, enshrined in tradition and ancient custom, invaluable clues to the social and religious culture of those times. All scholars will, therefore, hope that this treatise, to which I have the honour of contributing a foreword, will be followed by others dealing with all aspects of Parasurama's land.

PREFACE

IT was Alexander Pope who said that the proper study of mankind is man. Modern trends tend to belittle the value of scholarship and to under-rate arts and humanities in favour of the sciences. The partisans of science are never tired of declaring that the proper study of mankind is inanimate nature, but the weight and dignity of tradition is on the side of humanities. "They stand for the ancient manner, the exquisite grace, the mellow light, and the softer shadows of time."

Educated men and women cannot adequately discharge their duties as citizens without an understanding of the beliefs and motives underlying the daily observances and religious rites of their fellow citizens. At a time when primitive passions run high even among civilized nations, the need for the study of humanities (anthropology), during the most impressionable years of one's life, seems all the greater.

The study by men of different races and religions of the customs and manners of one another may help in promoting mutual amity and knitting closely the bonds of unity between them and eventually also help in banishing much of the communal animosity which is the bane of the national life of the present day.

Animated by such thoughts, the Prehistoric Archaeology of Kerala is being published, as the first of a comprehensive series under the general caption Kerala— Past and Present, in keeping with the Pan-Kerala movement.

The author is deeply grateful to Mr. J. P. Mills, Honorary Director of Ethnography, Assam, for his valuable foreword, and to the Government of Travancore for the loan of the blocks.

Department of Apthropology. | University Buildings. | Chepank, Madres. |

L. A. Krishna lyer.

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THE

PRE-HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY OF KERALA

CHAPTER I

ARCHAROLOGY in Kerala remained till recently avirgin field for research. The paneity of research was due to the absence of trained workers with a diversity of knowledge. According to one scholar, it is the science of antiquities previous to the earliest human documents. This view is not generally accepted, as it takes stock of only countries which possessed doormentary evidence for centuries and leaves out of account those primitive peoples, who, up to our own times, have lived outside history. It should, therefore, include all recopies and all those questions of man's existence of which written records by the peoples conderned are wanting. In the words of J. de. Mordan, itapplies to the most remote as to contemporary times. for it is impossible to dissociate ethnography, that is, the study of modern homogeneous groups from that of peoples of whom classical writers speak of from the study of men known to us by the traces they have left, men whose name is lost to posterity. In short, it will be more precise to state that the study of archaeological pre-history deals with peoples who have not becautabled

Jegues de Mergen, "Probislocie blau", pr va:

their annals. Here ethnography merges with preblateric archaeology since it begins with history.

Sir Leonard Woolly, the distinguished archaeologist, stressed on the want of sufficient contact between archaeologists and anthropologists, and suggested an interesting possibility of noravelling the problem of the past by significant survivals among sulsting peoples. He thinks that more light may be thrown on the problem of accient burial customs in Scuth India by the survivals among backward tribes than by direct archaeological sydence.

It may not be out of place to point out that the pre-historic branch of ethnographic studies began as a Brench science. The archaeology of the pre-historic remained a mere subdivision of othnography until it was perceived, with the aid of geology, that traces of man in the allevium, in caveras and in soils contributed materials of great importance to the study of origins. Thanks to the researches of M. Boule, Tournal, and Abbe Brenit, ovidences multiplied, though the thinking world was at first incredulous.

It shall be my endeavour to sift from the ecrapbeap of information about the pre-historic antiquities of Kerala and arrange them in their proper perspective with the aid of ethnology on the basis of European methods. My endeavour shall be to retell the history of human progress of the earliest man particularly in Kerala, which comprises of the States of Travancore, Cochin and the district of British Malabar, in the light of modern developments in Europe and India. Fergusson treated a port of the subject to his Rude Monuments of all Countries, while Logan made a survey of the Old Chipped Stones of India. As Head of the Geological Server of India, Bruce Foots was the first to make a notable contribution by the publication of his Prohistoric Antiquities. In 1923, Panchanan Mitra, in his work on Pre-historio India put forward a classification of the Stone Age cultures of India on the analogy of European culture sequences on typological grounds. 1t was not however, till the recent Yale Clambridge India Expadition led by Hellmutt de Terra that definite stratigraphic evidence for the age-sequences of the Indian Stone Age onlivres was discovered. Attention was deawn to the significance of these discoveries by Sir John Marshall in 1924 in his Moheniadaro and the Indus Civilization in 1981. The results of excavations at Mohenja-dare and elsewhere revolutionised all existing ideas, not only on the origins of the Indian, but also on that of buman civilization in general,

In Southern India and the Decean; where the megalithic remains occur in largest numbers, excevations took place very early and in the accounts published by Meadows Taylor and Breeks in the latter part of the nineteenth century, we are in possession of materials of the highest value. Since then a considerable amount of work has been done by Longhurst, Hunt, Muno, Wakefield, Yazdani, Richards and others. Thus, the science which was born in France has spread to every continent.

The pre-historic archaeology of Kerala can therefore only be said to be in the making. Her traditional

appient history is each fined in Kerala Mahamman and Keralelpathi. They recount that the axe-bearing incornation of Vishno (Personama) was obliged by the Rights to expiate the sin of having stain his mother by extircating the Kahatriyas, the enemies of the Bruh-This he accomplished in twentyone arreditions. At Viswamitra's suggestion be then made over all the land within the four seas to the Righly with all the blood-guiltinges attached to it, by making them deick the water of possession. The Brahmans turned him out of the land he thus gave away, but, with Subramania's assistance, he obtained by penance from the God of the sess, Varuna, the graph of some land to dwell on. The throw of his are was to determine the extent. He threw it from Gokarnam to Kanyakumeri (Cape Comorin).

The Gode came to visit the land thus miraculenety won and called it Parasurama's land, and Sive condescended to be worshipped at Gokarnam, the metropolis of the province that reclaimed from the sea. To people the land, Parasurama is said to have brought first of all a poor Brahmin from the banks of the Kriehen river. This man had eight sone and the clidest was made the head of all the Brahmans of Kerala and located, some say, at a place near Gokarnam and others say at Trisitageour (Trichur) in the Gochin State. Other Brahmans were next brought and located in sixty-four gramoms (villages). Ships with seeds and animals next came, also eighteen Samontas (sons of Brahmans and Kshatriya women) also Valshyas (Chettis) and Sudras and the low castes.

^{2.} Logan, "Manual of Malabar", p. 291.



A View of typical Dolmans in Anjunal (See p. 14)

The extermination of the Kebatriyas reterred to in the above legend may be considered as pointing to the struggle between the Brahmans and the Kebatriyas in which the mythical here is supposed to have played a part. He is supposed to have been the leader of a band of Brahman colonists, who pressed from behind, had to seek fresh lands and pastures new. This is said to have taken place between 1400 and 1000 B. C. There can scarcely be any doubt that Kerala was known to the Aryana at a very early period at least in the first balf of the fourth century. In the absence of direct evidence bearing on the question of the first settlers of Kerala, we have to rely on evidence derived from materials scattered all over Kerala in the lorgests in the shape of dulments, cairus, and stone cellars.

Ananthakrishna Aiyas, L. H., "Lactures on Rehnography", p. 49.

CHAPTER II.

Distribution of Pre-historic Monuments

THE distribution of pre-historic monuments follows the zonce of the primitive tribes in India. They are found in Assam, Chote Negpur, South India, and North-Western Frontier regions. They exist over the whole country drained by the Godavari, more commonly to the valleys of the Krishos, and on both sides of the ghats through Coimbatore as far as Capo Comorio. "Pre-historic dolmens or buriel cairne, in which are found bones, stones and other implements, politery, and beeds are to be met with here and there, especially in the upland tracts of the country, and the people who found their sepulchre in these cairns must have been among the first settlers of Kerala. Subjugated and barassed by the succeeding waves of immigrants or invaders, the race seems to have become extinct many centuries ago, and left no trace behind them except their own sepulchres". The men of the Bronzo Age used to bury their dead either in an unburgt condition. or after cremation, and raised burial mounds over them. The ashes of the gramated bodies, together with tools, weapons, and utensils are often placed in or beneath nens. In Travancore they are found in the Aujamad valley and the Cardamom Hills. The dolmens are found on both banks of the Pambanar in the Anjanad valley and command a wide view of the surrounding

t. Achutha Menon, C., "Cochin State Manual", p. 80,

country so as to be eminently suitable for defence. On the H ghlands they are larger in size than in the Lowlands, where they exhibit a progressive deterioration in sixe. The great concentration of delmens is in Bellary where they are as many as 2127 delmens. Such concentration of delmens is found in the Anjanad valley in Travancers. The custom of burying the ashes and hones in pote prevails among some eastes, and Logan thinks it to be the latest development of the art which distated the construction of the megalithic meanments.

Purpose of Megalithic Monuments

Respect for the dual seems to have been a prominest obstacteristic of man in the palaeolithis or
neolithic periods. The most interesting aspect of
neolithic life lay in the rituals of the dead which consisted in the raising of works of rough stone over the
dead who were butied in urns. The idea was that the
spirit of the dead should be given a location as in
life and that the chamber of the dead should be
the prote-type of the home. They apprehended
that "unless the departed spirit had a home and
other things as in life, it would haver restless and
troublemome around its old abode doing thereby harm to
the living". To accommodate the spirit they constructed various megalithic menuments which were rude
structures built of large pieces of stone.

We get an imperfect glimpse of the remote past from Ward and Conner who stated "that there is no

^{3.} Rangachuri, V., "Prehistorio India", p. 111.

monument deserving particular notice. The pandu-kushise or barrows, these remains of primeyal customs so common throughout the Peninsula, are also found here, though they are not numerous. In one opened by me at Chekkanad there was found to be a large carthern jar containing a few rice husks." Menhirs have been observed in parts of North Travancore and Cochin. When the Varkala tunnel was hored old pots and human skeletons were found. These remains indicate that the tracts were inhabited by the same race of men that constructed the pandukushise of the adjoining British tracts. The absence of any implements associated with such burials indicates their actiquity."

Coming to modern times, the late Dewan Bahadur Dr. L. K. Ananthakrishna Lyar made a notable contribution on the subject to the South Indian Encyclopaedia and Mr. K. K. Son Gupta, a distinguished geologist in Cochin (1910-1913) published the results of his researches on the megalithic monuments of the State in the Journal of the Indian Anthropological Institute. The present writer published the results of his researches in Travencore in the Consus Report for 1931 (Travencore) and the third volume of The Travencore Tribes and Castes, while Mr. Vasudeva Poduval. Director of Archiectogy, Travencore, made a notable contribution by his excavations in the High Ranges. Dr. A. Ayyanan published a valuable account of his

Ward and Council, "Montalize of Travancoro Survey" p.19.

^{7.} Nagamish, V., "The Travancere Sinte Manual"



A Dokmen in Anjanad showing coursed massary on the cover sink (See p. 14)

excavations in North Malabar in the Journal of the Mythic Secrety, Bangalore.

The study of primitive people living in our own day and thus coming within the range of modern prebistory is extremely useful in helping us to an understanding of the customs of the earliest inhabitants of our land. Like the Voddas of Ceylon, the Malapantarams of Travencore afford us a ready example. Their onstoms bespeak a people devoting little thought in their subsistance, which Nature provides in abundance. Their dwellings are of the simplest character, being rock-shelters or brock-winds rosting on a junglewood post or small hote, made of junglewood posts and wild plantain leaves. Weapons they have none but the digging spud. They live by hanting or on tubers which they find in the jungle. The dead are buried where they die. They illustrate the gradual disappearance of a people, without leaving any archaeologioal trace.

The occurrence of rock played an important part in the selection of sites for habitation by palaeolithic man. We find thicker settlements in Southern India than in Northern India. It is in the river districts of Southern India that palaeolithic man is traced most often exhibiting various stages of culture. The Bills Surgam caves of Karnul offer us a sure proof of very early palaeolithic cave dwellers in Southern India. It appears to have been reserted to from very early times to neolithic times by a race who were mighty hunters like the Malapenterams of Travancore. We have so far no cyldence of palaeolithic man or his industry in Karala,

as quartitie is not found in abundance. Further, palacolithic man appears to have sorupulously avoided to clear and explore forest regions which was difficult with his crude primitive weapons. Thus while in the Deman pleatons and East coast, palacolithic man lived, Kerala was without any human life."

The palaeolithic passed into the neclithic in Southore India, which became the emanating centre of the later neclithic enture over other parts of India. Throughout the world we see a number of innovations emanating with neclithic industry. This phase of development of human intelligence opened up the real high read to progress. Travanceure, Cochic and Malaber teem with monuments to illustrate this phase of culture.

A Guide to the study of the autiquities of the Stone Age, pp. 118-114.

CHAPTER III

Neolithic Monuments in Travancore

THE New Stone Age is marked by the steady development of social and religious ideas, the steady improvement of tools, weapons, and atensils, the extended conquest of meterial, and the laying down of all the essential bases on which the society of the present would be reating. Men were bent on improving their hammers and axes, on raising the standard of comfort, and on evolving an impressive and worthy form of burial for their leaders. They became very practical and very religious.

The dolmens are rude structures of large unbewoatoms resting on two or more others placed erect. They are found scattered on the long chain of wooded bills in They are generally considered to be Travencore. 'stones of the monkeys of India', but most of the primitive people of Travaucors have no knowledge of them por do they evince any interest in them. The people of Anianad call them valivadus or abodes of monkeys. Of their antiquity, Professors Macdonell and Keith point out references in the Rig-Veda, while the late Copinatha Rao refers to passages in Tolkapium and Purananuru. The Uralis call them pandubushies. pits made by the Pandus or Pandayas, to whom applient mysterious monuments all over India are generally as-They are tooked upon by the credulous as eribed. sacred and dangerous. It is eaid that peasants in France will not take shelter under them or go near

them at night, but the Vellalas and Malapulayae of Anjanad have no such fear. They sit under them when they grass their cattle. Dr. Borlaes and Dr. Stukeley in England think that delmans were connected with the activities of a shady priesthood. It is averred by Walhouse that the people who built them were a race of dwarfs about a span or cubit high, but the results of excavation unfold a different tate. The hones found are neither of dwarfs nor of giants, but men of ordinary stature and stone-slabs used for monuments indicate that they were cut from solid rock and carried some distance, and the people were physically equal to the present race of men.

The Uralis of Travapeers believe that dolmens are places where treasure is hidden. But no such treasure has been found in any of them. Dolmons are burial chambers in which people of late positible times buried their people of importance. In Travencore they are invariably found on the creeks of hills in the Banni Reserve, and they are built of unhawn blocks of stone. In the erection of dolmens. certain architectural methods and principles are observed: By the use of ortho-static rock, the maximum of wall area was provided with the micimum of thickness. With the upright wall technique went hand in hand the roofing of narrow spaces by means of horizontal slabs laid across on the top of the uprights. The second feature of magalithic monuments was the use of more or less coursed masonry set without mortar, each blook lying on its side, and not its edge. A series of uprights is first put in position, and over these are laid several

courses of rather smaller stones." A variant of the latter is found in the Anjanad valley.

Types of Dolmens

According to Col. Meadows Taylor, the dolmous are of two kinds, those consisting of four atomes, three aumorating stones and one capstone, leaving one side oven, and those in which the chamber is closed by a fourth stone; In the latter case, the fourth stone bas a aircular stone in it. Both those types of dolmens are found in Travancore. The dolmen at Kadakutti in the Renni Reserve is rectangular and the position above around is 8 ft. 1321/4 ft. in dimensions. It has only one gallery. Lengthwise it has only one single upright on one side and two others on the opposite side. Sideways. there is one on each side. The floor is payed with a single stone glab. The capstone is 7 ft. z 71/2 ft. and la: rudaly triangular. The dolmen is situated on the crest of a hill. It appears to have been a dolmon of the earliest times as it is built of unbown blocks of stone. The presence of atones lying scattered around the dolmen shows that it might have been covered with thom. Excavation yielded no results.

Mateer found another group of delinens on the hills inhabited by the Malayarayans. They stand north to south with a circular opening facing the south. A rude stone is fitted to this aperture with another acting as a lever to prevent its falling out. The stones, like stones at the top and bottom, are single clab. To this day,

^{9.} Fergusson, "Rough-Stone Menuments", p. 46d.

^{10.} Mateer, "Native Late in Travencore".

the Arayans make similar little cells of stone, the whole forming a low, a few inches square.

Dolmens are also found at Perunthalpara. on, both sides of the Thalayer or Pembanar river, a small tributary of the Ameravati, which flows into the Cauvery. Here on a flat level rocky tableland are seen a large number of dolmens in groups of three, four or five. Around each group is a circular packing of roughly bewo stones or boulders. These groups of dolmens are tound distributed in a circle. The disposition of the majority of the dolmens is east to west. A few are also in the north to south direction. The upright stones are rectangular in shape and are about 10 ft. long, 5 ft. broad and 7 ft. bigh. The cover slab is 17 ft. X 7 ft. 8". The floor is paved with a float stone slab 9 it × 4 fb. 6". The inner chamber is 9 ft. x 4 ft. Over some of the cover slabs are found remands of rubble stone packing. There is a semi-circular entrance to the dolman; on one side. Most of the dolmens have four aprights, but one dolmen in some groups has only three uprights and one eapttone, thus leaving one side open. At Wadattupara in the Malayattur Reserve there is a dolmen consisting of four uprights, but it is smaller and ornier in shape than those found in the Anjanud valley.

Foreign the fines for Wednesdown

The State Archaeologist, Mr. Vatudeva Poduval conducted extensive excavations in Tengakkal near Vandiperiyar on the High Ranges. In cist I, the measurements of the capstone were on an average 9 ft. 6 inches in length, 6 ft. 10 inches in breadth and 1 foot in thickness, and the area excavated was 10 ft. x 8 ft.



A Dolman in Rani Reserve (San p. 14)

to a depth of 41/2 ft. Two burish urns were unsarthed. one of which was 5 ft. 3 inches in circumference at the mouth, 7 ft. I inch in the middle and 9 ft. 10 inches in beight. The smaller upp had a circumfarence of 3 ft 8 inches at the mouth, 5 ft. 6 inches at the middle and 2 ft, 6 lookes in height. They were found side by side with an intervening space of I foot \$ inohes. The thickness of the bigger urn is II/16 inches. while that of the small one 1/2 inch. The bigger pen has all regard it a ting chain with parallel symmetrical ends. There were two more cists in a stone circle whose circumference was 85 feet. Trial diggings were also made at -Velimelai in South Travancore, where they brought to light twenty sepulchre uros. Two of them were uncarbled from one of which two iron axes were discovered. The pottery of the burial urns at Vandiperiyar and Velimalai is not painted and has very little decoration. The larger urus have a chain pattern or bead pattern drawing on the enterior close to the month. The emaller pots found inside are of the thin stip variety. Two of the smaller pots inside were wide mouthed with deep narrow bodies and round bases. The relies upearthed at Volimalai may be ascribed to the early Iron Age and those, exhamed at Vandiperivar to the noclithic period. Boing balf baked earthenware. they had become very fragile on assount of being buried in damp earth and had all got so broken or oracked that they could not be removed."

Travantore Archaeological Administration Report, 111 M. E., pp. 6-10.

Further excavations and observations were made by Mr. Podaval in the Bison Valley. He discovered a group of four delmens althated within two furlongs of the zig at the ninth mile sixth furlong stone of the main Devikulam-Perialismal road. These delmens are parallel to each other and face southwards the Muttukad Valley. Only the third from the west is in a state of good preservation. A sixt is also found adjoining these delmens and has been considerably damaged. The measurement of the delmen in good condition is as follows:—

	Longik	Breadth	Height	Thickness
Capatone	10'	61		±'
Side atone right	7}*		$5\frac{1}{2}$	17
Backstone	51		5	31
Inside width	41		2007	

The discovery of more delineus was made on the Venad side of the Bisen Valley on the Muttukad ridge. Of these, the first is a group of four delineus, three in front facing south, and the fourth in the back facing sust. The measurement of one of them is given below:

	Length	Breadth	Height	Thickness
Capetone	822	5'		3'
Side stones	772	33'		22
Back stone	3.7	41		4'
Inside width	21'			

The other dolmens are more or less of the same dimensions. The front of this delmen is covered by a standing stone $4^{4} \times 3^{7} \times 4^{9}$ thick. A dismantled rubble

mesonry surrounds this group and the inside is paved with stone slabe."

At Thondimelal, Mr. Saunders arouvated six of the graves found on bill tops. They were showled in a straight row, the graves being placed close to one After removing the broken stones that another. marked the spot was found a flat circular stone that wors a hollow sound to a light tapping with a crow Underneath it was found a large urn, the month of which was 15" lo diameter and the vertical height shout 32 ft. placed in a vertical position in the ground firmly embedded in clay and gravel. Each of the large urps contained cating and dripking ressels, vaces. chattis of various sizes and shapes, some of red clay. others black polished both inside and outside, of very thin material and very brittle to handle. They were firmly embedded in fine red clay that seemed to have sitted to and partly filled up the large upp, and the small vessels were filled with the same clay very tightly neaked, and were wedged in upon one another in such positions as to make it very difficult to remove them unbroken. Bones were found embedded in the vessels in one upp, and bones crumbled and mixed with clay in others. The Doctor was able to identify one of the bones as the hip bone of a man. On the top of one urn was found the blade of a sword, simist completely rusted through about 21 long with no sign of a bandle. Inside the urn were found two spear-heads and what appears to be an iron chisel. The urn itself and the vessels found

Terraneore Archaeological Administration Report, 1115 M. E., pp. 8-10.

inside conform to the various types of what is called "Iron Age Pottery" in the Catalogue of Prohistoric Astiquities in the Government Museum, Madess; some of which were taken from Taudigudi in the Palni Hitta and other parts of the Madura district but most of which are from the Nilgiria, the Coimbatore, Malabar and Tinnevelly districts.¹³

The delmens are still erected by certajo tribes of India and Burma, the Khasi, the Munda, the Gond, the Ornon, the Bhil of Central India, the Kurumba of the Nilgiris, and the Malayarayan of Travancore. In no case are the delmens of the size characteristic of the pre-historic phase of civilization. The earliest known examples are the largest. The delmens in the Anjarad Valley and the Cardamom Hills bear out this point. These found on lower elevations in the Ranni and Malayathur Reserves are smaller in size. The loss of culture in the case of the tribes who built megaliths is observed from the fact that the present day tribes do not usually display any tendency to construct delmens in Travancore.

Dr. Rivers has brought out this feature very prominently among the Todas of the Milgiriz, where dolmons are largely found. They (urnish us with an example of a tribe at a low level of material culture living in a district filled with remains of a fairly high civilization. Sarat Chandra Roy has observed the tame fact in Chote Nagpur and Cooper in Assam. In

Saunders, A. J., "Dalmans in the Palei Hills" (Madraz Meil Annual 1995)



A ministure Dointen of the Malayarayan (See p. 19)

Travancore, the Muthuvana and the Vellalae, who live in the delmon area in Anjanad, evides no interest in them. In the case of Malayarayana who-erect ministure delmens, a loss of culture can be detected in that they do not manipulate large stones as their predecessors did. Travancore furnishes an example of the Anjacad valley to illustrate the loss of material side of culture and shows that regions now inhabited by them were once the scenes of thriving civilization.

Monbir

Menhirs are found in parts of North Traysnoore or the Cardamom Hills. They are very few in number Bruss Woote found some menhirs of moderate size in the Madura district, though without any markings. There is a ministure menhip, 3 feet high, at Marayur, called Vathamkolli. The State Archaeologist found four menbirs and a group of dolmone in the grassland by the side of the sig on the 9th mile 6th fourlong stone of the main Devikulam Periakanal road in a damaged condition. Trial diggings were made at two different spots on this The first was beneath a machin 2 .7" in height from the surface. 3' 6" in width and 8" in thickness. The area dug was 10 ×8 or 80 square feet. After digging it feet below the surface, a burial tirn wer found. It was opposed by a scope slab I' 11" square and 4" thickness which served as its lid. The measurements of the urn ware:-

Kunjan Piliai, N., "The Cansus Report for 1981" (Trevennges) & "The Travannors Tribes & Castes,"

Height: 3'

Dismeter of rim: 1' 44'.

Thickness: 5.

Inner Diameter: 2' 4".

Inside was found a object, three broken pots and one from axe 5\dagger* long 5\dagger* wide at the sharper end. 1\dagger* at the objects measured wages—

- One shatty, rid with round botton; and in good condition with beight 4½", thickness ½", and dismeter 10½".
- (ii) One small pot broken blade, glazed, and with pointed bottom with height 3", thickness \$" and diameter 45".
- (iii) One large pot (broken) with pointed bottom, glazed and block with height 52", thickness 2", diameter 52".
- (iv) One small glazed (broken) put, top black, and bottom red, with height 5", thickness 3" and diameter 42".

Excavations at other mentire revealed more or less the same result. The urns are found on examination to be occase eartheowere imperfectly baked and ornamented by a circular obain pattern or less pattern drawing on the rim. Their contents mostly consist of carthenware demostic vessels, such as pote, pitchers, pot-stands, bowls, and flat bottomed chattis with red and black surface. The discovery of iron axe on the gits of one menhir indicates that the monuments belong to the Iron Age. No modern associable has the simple grandour of a menhir. They are probably memorial atones.

The Travalue Archaeological Report, 1311 M. E., pp. 14-17.

CHAPTER IV

Prehistoric Archaeology of the Cochin State

ARCHAEOLOGISTS owe a doep debt of gratitude to the late Dr. L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer and the State Geologist Mr. K. K. Sen Gupta for their contributions in the field of prehistoric archaeology of the Cochin State.

One class of sepulched monuments found in the Cookin. State is kodakallus or umbrella stones, which are really dolmens. In Byyal, a village 17 miles from Trichur, about 35 dolmens were found: anly three of them were found in fact, while the caustones of the rest have been pulled down. Two of the former are very similar in size, while the third is a little smaller than the other two. The capetoner rest on four slightly inclined strong laborite supports measuring & feet inheight above the ground and 113 feet in diameter at the hase and have a circumference of 36 feet. verticals are rudely triangular laterite stones with the base underground. They are 9 feet in height from the aper to the middle of the base which is 5 feet long, while the other measures 7 ft, and 44 ft, above ground respectively. Excavations unfolded vessels of the most fragile state and a few bits of bones not easily distinspishable were obtained. "Numerous kodakallus and topi kallus are lound in a village adjoining the Vellarakel bust!, balf a mile north-east to the 9th mile stone on the read from Wadakaneberi to Kunnaniulam,

come of them being in a good state of preservation. The place is a regular Stone-honge but on a ministure scale consisting of bet-stones and umbrella-stones in place of delugues, menbits, and cromleche. Flat ctones with both plane-convex and flat circular capstones are tound near Puthia Angadi and Manjeri (Bruad taluq, Malabar district) respectively."

Numerous are the dolmens found on the Cochin. They are generally of a rectangular pattern hills. formed of single stabs of granito verticals on the sides and flacced at the bottom by similar slabs with a large superlanguabant block which is rough and unbown, The one opened by Dr. L. K. A. Iyer had two cells partitioned by a single slab of grapite &" thick with a circular ring about 10" in diameter. The two slabs. extending east to west were 7' long and 4' broad and were very thick and massive. The laterior dimensions were 6' 3" × 3' 7". Excavation of one of the cells showed two big burial pros filled with earth. They could not be removed unbroken. The other sell yielded two jars filled with earth and chattis in a broken condition. They are said to be wheel made and fron from decoration except a few lines of simple mouldings around the rim of the lid and the neck and the base of the urn. No lid. severing the mouth of any of them was found. but they were packed to the brim with fine red earth which is originally said to have been poured into them in the form of liquid and which must have later become transferred into a small mass similar in shape to the urn.

Sen Gupta, K. K., "Megalithic Monuments of the Cochin-State" (J. I. A. I.), p. 106

It is in this mass of earth that bone bits, vessels, and beeds are found embedded. The smaller vessels may have contained offerings for the spirit of the dead and the circular hole in the middle slab must have been the passage through which the spirit was allowed to take the offerings. The iron implements placed in the grave represented the tools used by the men during their litatime."

Mr. See Gupta found delmons round about Mukkathode and on both sides of the tramway to Parambikulane. They are small caltars built of three upright slabs of stones with a expetence measuring 2×1½×1 oubic yards, where it is said some matrix (rages) passed their days to prayer and meditation. Trial excavations resulted in disappointments, as no human bones were found. In general, the entablature stones are observed with their plain faces downward or inward. The entrance to the delmons is invariably directed to the west, there belog no down either with a circular, eval, or rectangular aperture as are observed in France or in other parts of; the world. Most of them are simple and no evidence is observed as to their being covered with a cairn or tampulus."

Mr. Gupta also found a delinen $8t' \times 8' \times 4'$ on the edge of Munisra Thandu, north of Anapanthan. The expetone is irregular and fractured at the

The reader's attention is invited to the South Indian Oriental Encyclopaedia Where Dr. L. K. A. I per has death with the Cochin Prehistoric Archaeology.

See Gupta, K. K., "Negalithic Measuresets of the Coohin State", pp. 107—193

north-cast corner. The state consisted of banded gosles. No stone floor is observed and in this characteristic it resembles most of the delmons of the State. The delmon at Koethandan Thande is the only one in the State that has all its nides enclosed by slabs, but the western one has a parabolic opening very neatly chiselled measuring 1½ high and 1½ wide at the lowest part and this is closed by a slab 2½ × 1½ placed against it from outside. The inner apartments are 6' long 3½ wide and 2½ bigh. The expetence on the other hand is 9' long and 6½ broad. The stone floor is covered by 9 inches of soil which when removed increases the height of the parabolic opening to 2½ feet.

Menhir

Although the dolmens are a characteristic feature of the hills and jungles, the menhirs are conspicuous by their rarity. The only instance is the solitary row of menhirs at Komalapara Thala. The largest menhir consists of an irregular and flat upright monolith 12½ high, 7½ wide at the foot. Three other small monoliths form a straight row with the principal membir in its north tilted to the west and the south. In India the form of the membirs varies greatly in widely separated togalities. Two membirs were observed by Dr. Amantha-krishne, Iyer in the Trichur taluq.

Burial urps are big earthenware pots filled with earth and found buried at a depth of a few feet from the surface. They are found in the forests of the plains,

Sou Gupta, K. K. "Megalithic Monuments of the Cochin-State."

villages, and in the neighbourhood of towns. On execvation 14 of them were found in an area of 20 agrees feet in one locality. They were brittle and fell in pieces by their own weight soon as the sprrounding earth was removed. One of them measured 24' in height, 7' in circumference at the broadest point and 16 ipohes in diameter at the month. Examination shows iron implements, knives, and small swords in a crumbling state and fragments of bonce. Bonds and bracelets which must have been worn by women were also found in some of the urns. Pottery of various forms, vases, basins, ours, small vessels of antique and craceful forms all filled with earth were seen in them. Some of the vessels were neither placed nor organismted. It must, therefore, he inferred that they belonged to a comparatively party date. The smaller once have a kind of glossy appearance. This seems to have been caused by rubbing the surface with a muciliginous yum of Abubilum indicum."

The suggestion that the construction of the dotmens may be attributed to Jains succtice should be taken for what is worth. Dr. Subramonia lyer of Travancers cites the case of the dolmen at Santanpara believed to have been the abode of a hermit Santan by name. Mr. Gupta cays that the hermit Santan much have used the pre-existing dolmen and turned it to his own use just as hermit crabs take abetter in shells of gastropods. Ananthatrishus lyer speaks of a reported discovery of a trident, a lamp and hocks in a dolmen,

L. K. A. Lyer, "Pre-historic Archaeology of the Cochin State" (South Indian Colontal Encyclopsedia).

and if the report is true, the reason for their accuraces could be found in the explanation suggested above. Jaques Boyer thinks that the numerous polished stone-betches, pieces of crude pottery, grantto mill-stones, and primitive tools found in the vicinity indicate that the oromiceles served some other purpose than more encirclement of tuneral mounds. They invariably have openings facing week, a fact of which significance and importance bearing on the mode of disposal of the dead. "The thick-lipped, small-bodied Kadars, lords of the hills, are considered by Sir W. W. Hunter, as the remnant of a higher race than the Pulayas and the Muduvars of the Annamalais. These hills now very thin peopled, abound in the great atone monuments which the primitive tribes used for the dead"."

San Gupte, R. K. "Megalithic Monuments of the Cochin State", pp. 110-111.

CHAPTER V

Pre-historia Monuments in Malabar *

ROOK GUT cave-tombs are found in Checkmapera and Parambantall hills. Babington was the first to discover such tombs in 1919 and Rea in 1910, but their descriptions lacked details. Professor Jouvehu-Dubreuil was the first to draw attention to the very great interest attached to those rock-out tombs by assigning to them a Vedic origin. The surface indication for the underground tomb is a circular or square stab of atoms evering the top opening. The tombs explored by Babington had symmetrically arranged stone-circles as in typical cairns and urn burisls, that is, those at Adittacallur. At Feroke and Parambantalli there has been too much interference for the stone circles to stand. The capstone stands out prominently and is quite unmistakable.

Popularly shees rook-out tombs and simple funerary monuments are considered to be places of samadhi of sages. A Malayall poet ascribed them to Buddhists. The places where Bauddha sages attained airvance are still to be seen everywhere at Kuttakalla. They are readered unmistakable by the resery of heads, the lamps, arrows and carthenware that are found in thom.

The author is indetend to Dr. A. Appapeau's paper on Rock-Cut Cave-Tombs at Feroke, S. Malahar read before the Indian Science Congress in 1989 for information relating to Malahar.



Circular Capstone exposed in Malaber (See p. 28) (By the Conclesy of Dr. A. Ayyapport)

The large systlems were supposed to have been for in-urusing aged scople alive when they were reduced by sheer socility to a trog-like shape and hopped about. It is said that the oldest son would put the frog-like lather in an uru with sufficient food to last him for a protty long time and bury the are with proper rituals. Namezonadi is the name for such a barial urn. In the opinion of Dr. Ayyappan, the Buddhist tradition is more reasonable.

Popular traditions are not at all helpful to us in getting an idea of the significance of the rock out tombs. So far as numbers go, they run to thousands in each taking of Malabar, Coohin and Travancore. Dolmens and other purely megalithic structures are few and far between. Book-cut tombs are more numerous than dolmens and were considered to be a variant of the megalith. Architecturally, Malabar is even today a backward area in South India; in funerary architecture too the forbears of the modern Malayales may have been easy going and heterodax.

The simplest excavations in laterite for burial purposes in Mulabar are square or circular pits to receive large pyriform urns. Then we have the slightly more complex Kutakallar as hollow large enough for an urn with a ledge out over the bollow for placing minor functory articles and a flight of two or three steps leading from the surface level to the urn. A seat for the dead is a feature of many of the dolmens in common with the Feroke tombs and similar stups caves. Cremated remains have been found in many numbetakable dolmens, so that, in fact, there is little evidence

to dissociate the rock-out tombs of Feroke from the general South Indian megalithic culture complex. The presence of a triped found in Feroke is not said to imply fre-worship. Professor Dubrenit is of the opinion that the real-out tembs are 'Vedic remains surviving in the scalusion of Malabar, but Dr. Asyappan differs from it. Taking the oradecess of the pottery and the absence of bronze into consideration, the Feroke tembs are considered to be alightly earlier in age than the Suhr graves which have been fixed at about 200 B. C.

The bumen remains found in megalithic monuments in India have been semetimes buried, but perhaps more frequently oremated. Occasionally, a single sepulchre contains traces of burial as well as cremation. Instances of uvo busial of the whole body are med with in Sindh and Tinnevelly. Large jars parrow at the neck and pointed at the bottom were used and the body must have been reduced in bolk by dissection or rounding before it could be passed through the narrow neck. Similar jars are found in Babylonia where they are conted with bitumen, a black smear or false prenaved from the jules of Abatilon indicum. Bucial is supplemented by other precautions against the return of the ghost. According to Frazer, the practice of placing stones over the corpse may have a similar origin: stayes are provided with mounds, tomb-stones or enclosures in order to keep the dead from walking or to prevent the ghosts from returning to their old haunts."

Westermarck, Edward, "Origin and Development of Moral Ideas", p. 544.

The mode of disposal of the dead by burial is one of considerable antiquity. Macdonell and Kelth hold that the critical 'agaidagdhah' applies to the dead who were burnt in a funeral pyre; the other custom being burial 'anagni dhagdah' not burnt with fire. They also rater to 'paroptah' 'casting out' and 'uddhita', exposure of the dead. They add that burial was not rare in the Rig. Vedla period." A stone is set up between the dead and the living to separate them." Manimelthala. Tolkanium and Poruladigaram afford a valuable mine of information regarding the methods of disposal of the dead in Pre-Brahmanie days. They are very old Tamil works said to have come into being about the eight century A. D. Some scholars give them an earlier antiquity. The practice of creeding monuments in bonour of the dead must have belonged to the non-Arvan tribes known as Micobas, Rakshasas, Dasyus, and Nishadas who were the Pre-Dravidians. There are references to this custom in Tollaplum and "Oh, the potter who makes earthenware, Porapanuru. do please prepare the urn meant finding out of a fit stone to be get up in memory of the deceased here." It is possible that the cremating people may have been the Arvans who are said to have entered India about 2000 B. C.

^{23.} Carpenter, J. A., "Comparative Religious" p, 90,

Machensie, D. A., "Indian Mytha and Legenda" (Introduction) pp. 39-37.

CHAPTER VI

Age of Megalithic Monuments

Antiquarians after careful researches have been able to divide megalithic monuments into three classes according to their contents:—

- (i) The tumpli of the Stone Age are considered to be the most ancient. They are often of great size and are distinguished by circles of atones and stonechambers in which are found the remains of unburnt bodies with objects of atone and amber. The delinest opened by Ward and Conner contained no implements, and probably belonged to the Stone Age. This represents the lowest state of civilization before the introduction of metals.
- (ii) The turnuit of the Bronze Age contains rotice of burnt bodies, vessels, and implements, and ornaments of advanced sivilization. Turnuil of this period are rure in Kerala, but it appears that Mr. Bourdillon once picked up a bronze lamp which probably belonged to one such turnulus.
- (iii) Torntili of the Iron Age are the most recent and represent a comparatively advanced state of divilization. Iron implements, swords, spear-heads, and highly polished vessels are found in them. Excavations made in Kersla go to show that all the tumpli are of the Iron Age.

The crucial point for consideration is the probable time of the Iron Age. This is a knotty problem, and it is only possible to fix the time approximately. Iron was known to the Vedic Aryane from very early times. In the opinion of Mr. A. C. Gupta, the age of the Rig-Veda has been set down to Miscoene or at any rate the Plicoene or Pleistonene spech. Though the estimate is based on internal evidences, such remote antiquity has not attained the rank of scientific certainty. Macdonells' estimate may be taken as correct. The Iron Age in India may be fixed as being prior to 2000 B. C.

Significance of Dolmens

Major Muno claims that the delined builders of the Deceau were mining for gold, copper, iron and diamonds. He points out that the two districts where the dolmers are the thickest are Bellary and Dharwar, which are riddled with old workings of gold, copper, and iron. The Anjanad valley is the home of a large concentration dolmers. The spade of the geologist can alone determine what the mineral contents of the soil are in Anjanad. The late Mr. Vincent Ball says that gold-washing, as practised in India, is an example of human degradation. The Gonds of Central India are assidness gold-workers. They still erect ministure

^{25.} Gupta, A. O., "Big-Vedic India", Vol. 1.

delinear and thus show strong signs of continuity with people of the archaic civilization. The Kurumbas of the Nilgiris are the objet gold washers of the Madras Presidency dating from 500 B. C. The Malayarayans of Travancore, according to Walbouse, make imitation Kistavan of small slabs of stone to the Ranni Reserved forcets, but gold washing is not in evidence. It may have become a forgotten art.

Megalithic monuments in different parts of the world present such a uniformity of structure that it is bardly compatible with the theory of their independent origin. Monteline toensees attention on the continuous influence of the east on the west from remote bimes. thinks that the dolmen-builders were Margasson Dravidian in crigin. Raggeri strikes a different note and opines that they are Veddoid or Australoid in origin, and between the Mundas of the north and the Voddae of the couth there intervene the Kurumbas. Irulas, the Muthuvanz, and the Uraliz representing the Pre-Dravidians, who once spread over the whole of India and later came under the influence of the Dravidians and the Aryans. According to Flinders Petrie. the date of the Pre-Dravidian culture is about 2560. B. C. Tals view is confirmed by Perry who holds. "all the world over, the dolmens present such similarities of atracture that they must have been the work of a people, showing a common culture." Beyond

^{25&#}x27; Perry G. T., "Migalithite Culture of Indonesia".

Indonesia which includes among other areas, Assam and Burma, magatithic monuments are in evidence in the region of the Mundas of Chota Nagpur, the Todas of the Nilgiris, and the hill tribes of Travancore.

Conclusion

Palasontological evidence also supports the theory of the common origin of megalithic monuments. No thelets) remains baye been so for upcarthed to bear any direct evidence of the Negrito race in Travancore. "Judged by the nature and the contents of objects found, the megalithic remains of the Deccan and Southern India are post Vedic and later than any similar remains of the Central Indian Plateau, from where the culture would seem to have spread southwasde." Two (ossil remains have been found in India, the Bayana cranium and the Sailkot Dr. Keith is of opinion that they are of a Veddale type which represents the Pro-Dravidian (Proto-Australoid) people. The excavations of Mohenja-daro and Harappareveal that one of the akulta is proto Australoid. A. correspondence in type is revealed by one of the South India skulls at Adittanallur which is called Proto-Augraloid by Elliot Smith." The physical obsracteristics observed in the skutts are found among the

Hutton, J. H., "Consus Report for India", 1981, Vol. I., Part HI. Pp. lxv-lxvii

^{28.} Thid, p. baix.

existing South Indian tribes and among the Veddas of Ceylon. "There is a remarkable similarity between these and the skeletons found in the tumuli of Great Britain, France, and Germany which exhibit features of a delichecophalic people"." Thus the uniformity in the structure of the monuments is marked by a uniformity in the etructure of the contained skeletons which belong to a delichocophalic people.

While Pre-Dravidian is their time-honoured appellation, Eickstedt would call them Vedic, and Dr. Guha, Nishadic. Dr. Hutton has Isbelled them Prote-Australoid after Sewall. Though the Pre-Dravidian has for long stood the test of time, it is but fitting that the term Prote-Australoid should continue.

^{29.} Newbingen, "Modern Geography" pp. 203-204.

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